

## **Homily – Easter Vigil**

**April 20, 2019**

Last Monday, millions of people around the world watched in horror as a fire engulfed Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. There was sadness at the loss of that venerable place of worship and culture. There was anxiety as to whether anything of the over eight hundred year holy place would survive. The Parisian firefighters risked their lives for nine hours to control the fire and to protect its priceless art treasures. President Macron of France, who was at the scene, assured everyone that the church would be rebuilt. Notre Dame Cathedral is too precious an icon to yield to the fire. Money is already being raised for that task.

During the past year the Catholic Church around the world has been in crisis with the revelation of so many instances of sexual abuse of minors by clergy, including some bishops. Many people – from Pope Francis to bishops to lay people -- have addressed the need to rebuild the church, to cleanse ourselves of shame and sinfulness, to renew and restore the community of faith that Jesus inaugurated – on the cross, at his resurrection and ascension into

heaven, on the first Pentecost with the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples.

This evening we began in darkness, gathered around a small fire. We lit the paschal candle and, from it, our individual candles. We have listened attentively to beautiful readings from Scripture and responded in joyful song. Now this Cathedral is ablaze with light – reminding us of Jesus, the Light of the world, who brings us out of darkness into the wonderful light. We will welcome new members in baptism, strengthen others with Confirmation, and challenge all of us to renew our baptismal promises – to be faithful, loving missionary disciples of the risen Lord. With God’s help – with the inspiration and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we can rebuild the Church and restore its beauty.

Risen Savior, have mercy on us! Our Lady of Guadalupe, show us the way! Holy Spirit, help us all to become the foundation of a rebuilt church that is based on the Word of God. Christ is risen! Alleluia!!